

**Re-Entry Program  
for Occupational Therapists  
Pacific University, School of Occupational Therapy**

**Introduction**

A critical factor in returning to occupational therapy practice after a period of 3 years or more is to understand how practice has changed. This involves updating one's knowledge in the theories that guide practice and being able to do the occupational therapy process of evaluation and intervention in the context of actual practice. To assist individuals in returning to practice, the School of Occupational Therapy will offer a graduate level independent study course in collaboration with a licensed occupational therapy practitioner. The course will consist of 2 components – a didactic component with the focus on best practice in occupational therapy and an internship component with the focus on the practical application of the occupational therapy process.

A faculty member from the School of Occupational Therapy at Pacific University will facilitate the didactic component. The internship component will be facilitated by a licensed Occupational therapist in collaboration with the School of Occupational Therapy faculty member. The collaborative design of the course between the educational and practice communities is taken from the writings of Gail Fidler, Wendy Wood and her colleagues on the framework for professional education in occupational therapy. In her Eleanor Clark Slagle lecture, Fidler put forth “Professional preparation requires that the educational process be concerned with teaching a body of principles and concepts rather than routine skills or ‘slide rule approaches’” (p.86). In her lecture she acknowledges the importance of learning both the knowledge guiding practice and the skills to carry out practice, and puts forth that the skills to carry out the occupational therapy process is best learned in the context of the practice setting. Wendy Wood and colleagues also support this view of professional education in their 2000 article on graduate occupational therapy education.

**Description of Course**

***OT 610 – Independent Study*** (Section 10 – physical rehabilitation; Section 11 – mental health; and Section 12 – pediatrics); Focused study in occupational therapy practice areas. 2 credits. Graded as Pass/No Pass.

**Didactic component** – 1 credit (16 hours of 1:1 interaction between faculty member and the re-entry occupational therapist; interaction may be face-to-face interaction or via an online course)

**Objectives:** (taken from the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education 1998 Standards for an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist)

- Understand and describe Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process as it relates to practice in general and the identified practice arena
- Understand and describe the concepts of best practice in occupational therapy, in general and specific to chosen practice arena
- Understand and apply occupational therapy models of practice and frames of reference to guide the evaluation and intervention process
- Use professional literature to make informed practice decisions
- Know when and how to find and use national and international informational resources, including appropriate literature within and outside of occupational therapy

**Methods:**

- Re-entry applicant completes the AOTA Professional Development Tool identifying specific goals in the areas of: knowledge, critical reasoning, interpersonal abilities, performance skills, and ethical reasoning.
- Reading assignments with focus questions to be answered tailored to complement the internship component
- 2 written assignments: (1) Compare/contrast the Uniform Terminology III with the OT Practice Framework: Domain and Process and apply to specific practice area; (2) Define and describe best practice in identified practice area

**Internship component** – 1 credit (40 hours on-site practical application of the occupational therapy process to be completed over time; not to be completed in a 1-week timeframe)

**Objectives:** (taken from AOTA's 2002 Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the O T Student)

- Articulate a clear and logical rationale for the evaluation process based on current best evidence
- Select relevant screening and assessment methods to evaluate the patient's/client's occupational performance
- Obtain sufficient and necessary information in order to develop an appropriate plan
- Interpret evaluation results to determine patient's/client's occupational performance strengths and challenges
- Establish an accurate and appropriate intervention plan
- Articulate a clear and logical rationale for the intervention plan based on current best evidence
- Implement intervention plans that are occupation-based and client-centered
- Evaluate effectiveness of intervention strategies
- Use sound judgment in regard to safety of self and others

**Cost**

- Take course for credit = \$1, 266 (\$633 per credit hour)

**\*\*Occupational Therapy Assistants:** A similar structure could be implemented for occupational therapy assistants, though modifications would be necessary to meet the knowledge and practice expectations at the occupational therapy assistant level. The School of Occupational Therapy is willing to do this though needs to seek guidance and assistance from experienced occupational therapy assistant practitioners.

**References**

Fidler, GS. (1966). Learning as a growth process: A conceptual framework for professional education. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 20, 1-8.

Wood, W., Nielson, C., Humphry, R., Coppola, S., Baranek, G., & Rourke, J. (2000). A curricular renaissance: Graduate education centered on occupation. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 54, 586-597.

**Approved by the Oregon OT Licensing Board, April 29, 2005 Board meeting**